CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 22 JULY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A STATEMENT MADE BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. NAWAZ SHARIF, PRIME MINISTER OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN, ON 6 JUNE 1991 AT THE NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE, RAWALPINDI, PAKISTAN

I have the honour to transmit herewith a major policy statement made by His Excellency, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on 6 June 1991, at the National Defence College, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Signed) Ahmad Kamal
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

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Statement made on 6 June 1991 at the National Defence College, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, by the Prime Minister of Pakistan

In discussing national security, it is important to recognize that internal strength is of primary significance. My Government, therefore, attaches the highest priority to a strong defence in order to deter any threat to our national security. The strength of our own armed forces provides us the strongest guarantee for the maintenance of a peaceful environment for the country. My Government would, therefore, continue to do all that is possible to ensure that our armed forces are well equipped and prepared to safeguard Pakistan's security and territorial integrity.

History teaches us that the vital importance of the armed forces notwithstanding, successful defence of any country is dependent on the overall strength of that country. Factors such as the moral and spiritual foundations of the society, political stability, social cohesion and harmony, economic strength and technological advancement provide the underpinning and constitute the backbone of its defence capability. Our survival and progress as a nation will, therefore, depend, in the ultimate analysis, upon our success in acquiring internal strength. Only then would we be able to ward off external threats to our security.

Our foremost objective is to establish a progressive, dynamic and just socio-economic order in the country. Only by doing so would we be able to accelerate economic development, hasten the pace of technological advancement and raise the standard of living of the people. Only thus would the nation acquire strength and enter the twenty-first century with confidence and dignity.

This is not an easy task. We face numerous problems and difficulties, both internally and externally. But I am confident that by maintaining unity, faith and discipline in our ranks, and by fully harnessing our resources, we can realize our goals.

We have already taken a number of steps with this aim in view. We are encouraging the private sector to engage in productive activity. We have liberalized the economy and done away with rules and regulations, which had stifled private initiative in the past. We have introduced reforms for the elimination of foreign exchange restrictions and for creating a liberal environment for foreign private investment in the country. We are also disinvesting State corporations, which were a heavy burden on the national exchequer.

We have resolved the vexed issues of apportionment of river waters and the distribution of financial resources between the federal and provincial governments. We have steered through the Parliament a progressive, democratic and welfare-oriented Shariah bill.

We are taking strong measures to curb crime and lawlessness, eradicate the Kalashnikov culture and put an end to drug trafficking, which are eating into the vitals of our society. These steps would strengthen social harmony and stability. They would also promote economic activity by encouraging domestic and foreign investment in the country.

These reforms and measures will impart vitality and dynamism to the economy and polity, enabling us to achieve self-sustained growth and self-reliance. Self-reliance certainly does not mean isolation. No nation can afford to isolate itself from the rest of the international community in the increasingly interdependent world of today. A policy of self-reliance means primarily to depend on our own resources for improving the lot of our people. But it does not exclude mutually beneficial economic cooperation with friendly countries without compromising our national sovereignty or self-respect.

The pursuit of rapid economic development and social progress presupposes an environment of peace and security. Thus, my Government is guided by the twin objectives of progress at home and peace abroad. Pakistan will, therefore, continue to follow the policy of developing friendly relations with all countries on the basis of the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs and peaceful settlement of disputes.

We are gratified to note that the United Nations has assumed a more effective role in the settlement of regional disputes and conflicts. It would be our endeavour to strengthen this trend, which, we believe, is in the best interest of international peace and progress. We also hope that the five permanent members of the Security Council would play their due role in ensuring respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

We have taken an initiative for expediting the political settlement of the Afghanistan issue. We have entered into consultations with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the countries concerned. We have welcomed the five-point initiative for the settlement of the Afghanistan issue announced by the Secretary-General last month. The key to such a settlement remains in the transfer of power from the Najibullah regime to a broad-based government in Kabul established in accordance with the wishes of the people of Afghanistan. Only such a broad-based government can restore peace in the country and enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homeland. The settlement of the Afghanistan issue would remove a major obstacle in the improvement of our relations with the Soviet Union, in which we are deeply interested.

The Islamic world, with which Pakistan has special links, has suffered grievously because of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, which led to the Gulf War. We took a principled position on the issue in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We were gravely concerned because Iraq's action violated recognized norms of inter-State conduct. It also posed a serious threat to the security of Saudi Arabia, a fraternal country, which has always stood by Pakistan's side.

We made efforts to find a peaceful and honourable solution of the problem. For this purpose, I undertook visits to 12 Islamic countries and sent special envoys to 13 others. Unfortunately, my efforts and those of the international community did not succeed. The armed conflict has caused massive material destruction and heavy loss of human life, particularly in Kuwait and Iraq.

Following the liberation of Kuwait and restoration of peace in the area, I visited Kuwait and assured the Amir and his Government that Pakistan was ready to continue the tradition of cooperation with Kuwait and other regional States and would support their efforts to strengthen peace and stability in the region. It will be our endeavour to develop further bilateral ties with these countries in political, economic, technical and other fields. Pakistan stands for moderation, stability and cooperation among the Islamic countries of the Gulf region.

Pakistan will continue to strengthen its close and brotherly relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey. We take deep satisfaction in the recent decisions of the three countries to revitalize the Economic Cooperation Organization and to hold a summit conference of these three fraternal States before the end of 1991 to advance this cooperation.

Friendship with China has been a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy and a source of strength to regional peace and stability. We will continue our efforts to develop close and friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation with China.

Pakistan values its friendship with Japan, which has emerged as an economic super-Power. It is Pakistan's largest trading partner. The two countries also maintain close cooperation in various fields. My Government will pay special attention to the strengthening of friendly ties with Japan.

We are impressed by the fast economic growth achieved by several countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Their experience offers us important lessons. It would be our effort to promote friendly ties and mutually beneficial cooperation with these countries. We shall also intensify our efforts to promote closer cooperation with African nations in political, economic, commercial and technical fields.

Europe is undergoing a process of rapid transformation and integration. Pakistan attaches importance to its relations with the region and wishes to develop them further. It is our hope that the European single market, which will come into existence in 1992, will provide easier access to imports from the developing countries.

The developing countries currently face serious problems of low level of developmental assistance, the heavy burden of debt servicing, negative resource flows, an unfavourable international trade regime, adverse terms of trade and an unjust international financial and monetary system. We will continue our efforts to promote North-South dialogue with a view to overcoming these problems.

Pakistan, as a developing country, has close identity of views with other third world countries on important international political and economic issues. We wish to develop further third world solidarity through the promotion of South-South cooperation.

India's military build-up, development of medium-range missiles and the military potential of its unsafeguarded nuclear programme pose a serious threat to Pakistan's security. The threat is accentuated by India's refusal

to resolve the Kashmir dispute peacefully and its attempt to suppress the indigenous uprising in occupied Kashmir through massive and brutal use of force. India has concentrated over 400,000 military and paramilitary forces in occupied Kashmir for this purpose. The heavy deployment of its forces along the Pakistan-India border also serves to heighten tension. This cannot, however, prevent us from offering moral and political support to the struggle of the Kashmiri people for the exercise of their right to self-determination, as recognized by the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

In the face of this serious situation, Pakistan cannot be oblivious to the requirements of its security. Nevertheless, we will continue our efforts for establishing good neighbourly relations with India. A beginning was made at Male during the summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation last November. My recent visit to New Delhi to attend the funeral of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi enabled me to establish personal contacts with leaders of India's main political parties. I was encouraged by the positive response to our desire to improve bilateral relations. We hope that once the new Government has assumed power in New Delhi after the elections, it will be possible for us to move forward towards the establishment of tension-free relations and the settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. This would be in the spirit of Male and that of the Simla Agreement, and would enable the two countries to devote their scarce resources to the improvement in the quality of life of their peoples.

The issue of nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia is another complicating factor in Pakistan-India relations. It is, therefore, necessary to place the issue in its proper perspective.

We suffer from a serious energy shortage, which not only hampers economic and industrial growth, but causes hardship to our people. In view of our ever-growing energy requirements, we have no option but to rely on the generation of nuclear power for meeting the needs of our expanding economy.

Unfortunately, our efforts to develop nuclear energy and technology for peaceful purposes have been subjected to unfair criticism and discriminatory pressures. We have repeatedly asserted that our nuclear programme is devoted to peaceful purposes. In pursuance of our regional approach to nuclear non-proliferation, we have expressed our willingness to accept any equitable and non-dicriminatory regime for keeping South Asia free of nuclear weapons.

We have made the following proposals to prevent nuclear proliferation in South Asia:

(a) Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, a proposal that has been endorsed repeatedly by the General Assembly since 1974;

(b) In view of India's opposition to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, we proposed in 1978 that, as a first step, Pakistan and India should issue a joint declaration renouncing the acquisition or manufacture of nuclear weapons;

(c) In 1979, Pakistan proposed an agreement with India on a system of bilateral inspection of all nuclear facilities on a reciprocal basis;

(d) We also proposed in 1979 simultaneous acceptance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards by Pakistan and India on all nuclear facilities;

(e) Pakistan expressed its readiness in 1979 to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons simultaneously with India;

(f) Later in 1987, Pakistan proposed the conclusion of a bilateral or regional nuclear-test-ban treaty;

(g) In 1987, Pakistan also proposed the convening of a conference on nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of regional and other interested States.

The above proposals have been reiterated by us from time to time. Pakistan's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, both at global and regional levels, is thus clear and unwavering. It is not fair, therefore, to cast doubts on Pakistan's intentions and to subject Pakistan to discriminatory treatment. No self-respecting nation can accept that.

We are gratified to note that the regional approach to disarmament is steadily gaining ground in international circles. Our resolution calling for initiatives for confidence-building measures, nuclear non-proliferation and conventional disarmament at regional and subregional levels was adopted by the General Assembly in 1990 by an overwhelming majority of 142 votes in favour, none against and 10 abstentions.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones have already been established in Latin America and the South Pacific region with the endorsement of the five nuclear-weapon States. Similar proposals have been advanced concerning other regions. Last year, Argentina and Brazil signed an agreement to use nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes. They also agreed to submit their nuclear programmes to bilateral inspection and, later, to IAEA safeguards to ensure the peaceful character of their nuclear programmes.

More recently, President Bush has announced a major initiative for arms control on a regional basis in the Middle East. Among other things, the initiative calls for steps by all the regional States to prevent nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. France has also in its recently announced disarmament proposal called for regional regimes for the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction.

We firmly believe that nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia is a sine qua non for regional peace and progress. We are willing to enter into a bilateral arrangement with India or a regional regime for ensuring that South Asia remains free of all weapons of mass destruction. We are prepared to adopt measures aimed at a mutual and balanced reduction of forces

consistent with the principle of equal and undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments. However, we cannot and will not take unilateral steps that endanger our national security.

Pakistan and the United States of America have a history of friendship going back to the 1950s. This friendship is solidly based on our shared beliefs in principles and human values, our common commitment to democratic institutions, the respect we attach to individual liberty and sustained cooperation stretching over several decades. There is a close convergence of views on such issues as Afghanistan and regional peace and stability. Therefore, despite the occasional ups and downs, the friendship between Pakistan and the United States has continued with the passage of time and manifested itself in the expansion of mutual cooperation in diverse fields.

Against this background, the current difficulties in Pakistan-United States relations are particularly regrettable. This relationship, which has served the interests of the two countries so well in the past and has so much potential for the future, should not be allowed to be impaired.

It is an irony that the current difficulties in Pakistan-United States relations stem from differences of approach to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation, to which both are deeply committed. The United States has focused almost exclusively on Pakistan's nuclear programme. The fact is that India exploded a nuclear device in 1974. It has a number of nuclear enrichment and reprocessing facilities outside the framework of IAEA safeguards. It is also reported to have unsafeguarded plutonium sufficient for producing over 100 Hiroshima-size nuclear bombs. We cannot, therefore, ignore India's fast-growing nuclear programme and jeopardize our national security.

Pakistan is ready to enter into multilateral consultations for promoting the cause of nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia. There are indications that the United States, the Soviet Union and China might be inclined to support a regional approach. I hope that they would be willing to move together with Pakistan and India to achieve the objective of keeping our region free of nuclear weapons.

I would like to propose specifically that the United States, the Soviet Union and China consult and meet with India and Pakistan to discuss and resolve the issue of nuclear proliferation in South Asia. The aim of the meeting should be to arrive at an agreement for keeping this region free of nuclear weapons on the basis of proposals already made or new ideas that may emerge. The nuclear non-proliferation regime to be negotiated during the proposed multilateral consultations should be equitable and non-discriminatory.

We hope that the proposal would receive an early response from the countries concerned so that arrangements can be finalized and the conference held as quickly as possible.

A regional non-proliferation regime, containing guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States and agreed to by all the regional countries, is a practical method of resolving the problem in all its dimensions. Such a

regime would help usher in a climate of mutual trust and strengthen peace and security in South Asia, enabling the States of the region to concentrate their energies and efforts on accelerating economic development and promoting the well-being of their peoples.

I have decided to send to the United States a high-level delegation led by Mr. Wasim Sajjad, Chairman of the Senate, and including Mr. Akram Zaki, Secretary-General, Foreign Affairs, and other senior officials to exchange views on the whole range of Pakistan-United States relations. We must acquire a better understanding of each other's point of view on various issues such as Afghanistan, regional peace and security, human rights, narcotics control, disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and cooperation in various fields.

Given sincerity of purpose and mutual goodwill, I am confident that we will ultimately succeed in resolving our current difficulties on the basis of mutual understanding and accommodation. Our search for a way out of the current impasse will be facilitated if each side tries to understand the compulsions of the other and focuses on ultimate objectives rather than the means for achieving them.

Let me conclude by reiterating our desire to develop friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation on the basis of equality with all countries, big and small, to serve the interest of international peace and development. We will strive in particular to create a tension-free and peaceful environment in South Asia to usher in an era of progress and prosperity in the region.